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Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its organizational session*

New York, 12 and 16 February 2001

Summary

By its resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000, the Economic and Social Council decided to establish the United Nations Forum on Forests as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The main objective of the international arrangement on forests is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. The Forum would, inter alia, within five years, consider, with a view to recommending to the Council and through it to the General Assembly, the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The Forum would also take steps to devise approaches towards appropriate financial and technology transfer support to enable the implementation of sustainable forest management.

The Forum held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters on 12 and 16 February 2001. The Forum recommended for adoption by the Council a draft decision concerning the venue of its sessions. It also adopted two decisions, on the location of its secretariat and on its future methods of work.

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Forum on its organizational session; it will be combined with the report of the Forum on its first session, to be held from 11 to 22 June 2001, and issued in final form as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1).

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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Venue of the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind paragraph 4 (i) of its resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000, decides that the first and fifth substantive sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests will be held in New York, that two of the three intervening sessions will be held in Geneva and one in San José, Costa Rica, and that any ministerial segment to be convened during the intervening period will be convened during the session held in San José.

B. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following decisions adopted by the Forum are brought to the attention of the Council:

Decision ORG/1
Location of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests, expressing deep appreciation to the Governments of Costa Rica and Switzerland and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, who offered to host the secretariat of the Forum, and recalling paragraph 11 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, in which the Council decided that the secretariat would preferably be located at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and that a recommendation for a final decision on the matter should be made at the organizational session of the Forum, taking into consideration all proposals, decides to locate the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Decision ORG/2
Future methods of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests: election of officers and determination of the duration of their terms of office

The United Nations Forum on Forests, decides on the following future arrangements for the election of its bureau:

(a) The Forum, immediately following the closure of a regular session, will hold the first meeting of its subsequent regular session for the sole purpose of electing the new Chairman and other members of the Bureau, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council;

(b) The members of the Bureau shall hold office for a term of one year;

(c) In this context, the provisions of paragraph 5 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000 apply only to the substantive part of the sessions of the Forum.

II. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

3. In accordance with paragraph 7 (a) of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the United Nations Forum on Forests held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters on 12 and 16 February 2001. The Forum held 3 meetings (1st to 3rd).

4. The session was opened by the Acting Chairman of the Forum, Mubarak Hussein Rahmtalla (Sudan).

5. The Coordinator and head of the secretariat of the Forum delivered an opening statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

B. Attendance

6. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Council resolution 2000/35, the Forum is composed of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of the specialized agencies, with full and

equal participation. Representatives of the following States attended the session:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

7. The following United Nations offices and organs were represented:

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Division for Sustainable Development), United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme.

8. The following specialized agencies were represented:

World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

9. The following intergovernmental organization was represented:

European Community.

10. A number of non-governmental organizations were also represented.

C. Election of officers

11. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 12 February, the Forum elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman:
Mubarak Hussein Rahmtalla (Sudan)

Vice-Chairmen:
Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia)
Alexey Kornienko (Russian Federation)
Gustavo Suarez de Freitas (Peru)

Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur:
Knut Øistad (Norway)

D. Adoption of the agenda

12. At its 2nd meeting, on 12 February, the Forum considered its provisional agenda for the session, which was contained in document E/CN.18/2001/1.

13. The representative of Norway proposed that the following item be added to the agenda: "Progress towards the establishment of the collaborative partnership on forests".

14. The Forum then adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.18/2001/1, as orally amended. The agenda, as amended, was as follows:

1. Election of officers and determination of the duration of their terms of office.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Consideration of all proposals and options concerning the location of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests.
4. Progress towards the establishment of the collaborative partnership on forests.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its organizational session.

E. Documentation

15. The documents before the Forum at its organizational session are listed in the annex.

F. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its organizational session

16. At its 3rd meeting, on 16 February, the Forum adopted the draft report on its organizational session (E/CN.18/2001/L.2), as introduced by the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur, Knut Øistad (Norway).

III. Consideration of all proposals and options concerning the location of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

17. The Forum considered agenda item 3 at its 2nd meeting, on 12 February. Presentations of offers to host the secretariat were made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Switzerland, and by the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

18. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Sweden (on behalf of the European Union).

IV. Progress towards the establishment of the collaborative partnership on forests

19. The Forum considered agenda item 4 at its 2nd meeting, on 12 February. It heard a statement by the Assistant Director-General of the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests.

20. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Costa Rica, Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Sweden (on behalf of the European Union).

V. Action taken by the Forum at its organizational session

Location of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

21. At its 3rd meeting, on 16 February, the Forum adopted a draft decision entitled "Location of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests", submitted by the Chairman and members of the Bureau on the basis of informal consultations held pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 (see chap. I, sect. B, decision ORG/1).

Future methods of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests: election of officers and determination of the duration of their terms of office

22. At its 3rd meeting, on 16 February, the Forum adopted a draft decision entitled "Future methods of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests: election of officers and determination of the duration of their terms of office", submitted by the Chairman and members of the Bureau on the basis of informal consultations held pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 (see chap. I, sect. B, decision ORG/2).

Venue of the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

23. At its 3rd meeting, on 16 February, the Forum recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft decision entitled "Venue of the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests", submitted by the Chairman and members of the Bureau on the basis of informal consultations held pursuant to Council resolution 2000/35 (see chap. I, sect. A).

24. After the adoption of the draft decision, statements were made by the representatives of Nigeria (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), the United States of America, Switzerland, China, Australia, Costa Rica and Sweden (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union).

Annex

List of documents

Document number	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/CN.18/2001/1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.18/2001/2	2	Letter dated 29 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
E/CN.18/2000/L.2	6	Draft report